

Does an Individualist Mindset Lead to More Charitable Donations?

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the growing amount of research on charitable giving, researchers still do not agree on why people donate. Do they donate for selfish incentives, such as to feel good about themselves, or for purely altruistic reasons associated with improving the world?

RESEARCH QUESTION

The goal of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of when and why people donate to a charitable organization.

Specifically, when primed to be in an individualist mindset over a collectivist mindset, will people be more willing to donate their time and/or money to a charitable organization?

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

- Theory of impure altruism:** a donor’s intentions for giving cannot be purely altruistic because of the “warm-glow” they experience. This warm-glow is an individualist reward for giving, rather than the traditional thoughts that giving is done simply to help those in need.
- Time-Ask Effect:** people who are asked a question regarding their intentions to donate time (ie: volunteer) first and then a question regarding their intention to donate money will donate more money to the charity regardless of their intention to donate time.
- Research results that confirm that high collectivism as an individual difference influence higher levels of prosocial behavior within organizations known as organizational citizenship behaviors.

RESEARCH METHODS

- The experiment takes the form of a 2 (prime: collectivist vs. individualist) by 2 (question: money-ask first vs. time-ask first) survey design.
- Participants were randomly primed to adopt either a collectivistic mental orientation or individualist mental orientation
 - Priming Task: read a paragraph and circle pronouns like “we” and “us”, or “I” and “me.”

- 190 respondents
- Introduction to the Principles of Marketing course participant pool
- Dropped results of participants that did not complete priming procedure

Independent Variable:
Individualist vs. Collectivist Mindset Prime



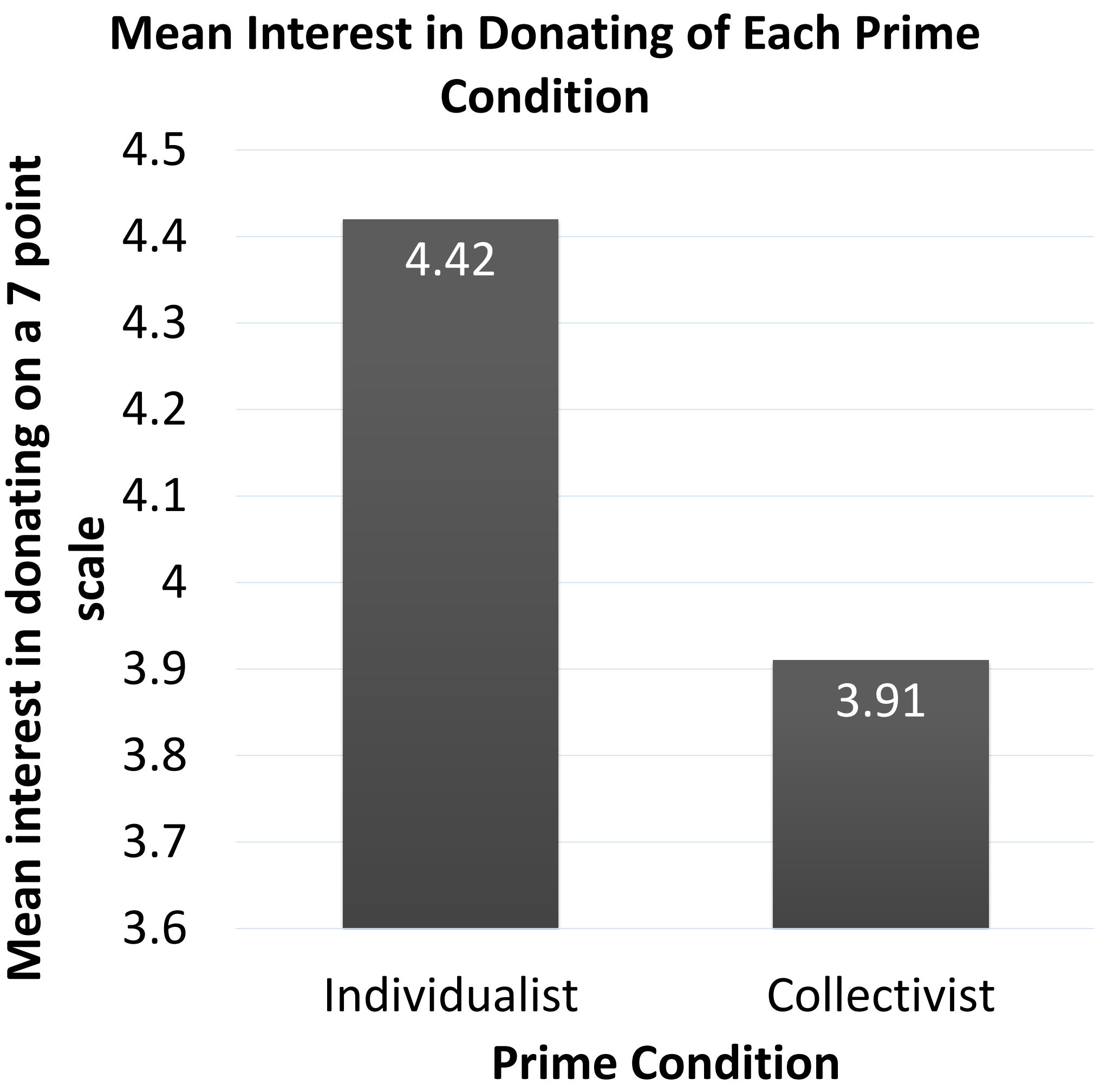
Dependent Variable:
Interest in Donating to HopeLab Charity after reading about cause

Not at all interested 1 2 3 Moderately interested 4 5 6 Extremely Interested 7

RESULTS

Statistically significant difference in donating interest between those primed to be in the individualist mindset versus those primed to be in the collectivist mindset.

Group Statistics



Independent samples t-test results

	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Interest in donating *Equal variances assumed	1.982	0.049

IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

- Charitable organizations will understand how to target their marketing message to potential donors, hopefully improving their donation rate, which is stated as their most challenging objective.
- Contradictory results to traditional findings that support the idea that a higher IC (collectivist score) correlates to a higher willingness to take part in activity that aids the welfare of the entire group, rather than the individual directly.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Two possible reasons have been determined that may explain why those primed in the individual mental orientation are willing to donate more than those primed in the collectivist mental orientation. Further research is needed to fully understand the plausibility of each assumption outlined below.

- Individuals primed in the individualist orientation donate more to balance out the feeling of being overly individualistic.
- Individuals are concerned with their own well-being at the time of the donation ask because of the individualist mental orientation prime, and want to do something to make themselves feel good about themselves.

No other factors tested in the survey (ability to imagine yourself volunteering, how connected you feel to the cause, how sympathetic you are to the cause, gender, or age) created a significant result.

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